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ABSTRACT

The public schools of today are pictured as rigid bureaucratic structures, unresponsive to dynamic change, and stultifying to individual initiative and growth. A discussion is presented on the future needs of education that will meet expanding demands for greater freedom for the individual in a democracy to make intelligent decisions. Proposals for change in the philosophy and organization of public education are offered. (JD)

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CRITICAL EXPERIENCE AMIDST BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES: INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE ON EDUCATIONAL FUTURES

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> It is the thesis of this book that change - constant, accelerating, ubiquitous - is the most striking characteristic of the world we live in...
>
> Postman and Weingartner in Teaching As A Subversive Activity[1]

THE NEED FOR CRITICAL EXPERIENCE

I agree. Change - constant, accelerating and ubiquitious - is the most striking characteristic of the world we live in. Further, it is a safe bet that change will be the most striking characteristic of the future as well - of the world we, and those who come after us, will live in. What does this mean or imply about education in the future and about what we should be doing now? Also, in the face of accelerating change, can we afford the traditional values of individualism, freedom and democracy? It is my main thesis that what I call "critical experience" is the most appropriate response to change - constant, accelerating, ubiquitious, and thus, that fostering critical experience should become increasingly central to education in the future. It is my further thesis that only through such a process is it likely that the traditional values of individualism, freedom and democracy will be realized to any meaningful extent in the future. I will first discuss what I mean by "critical experience" and explain why I think it is the most appropriate response to a rapidly changing world; then I will discuss some implications for the values of individualism, freedom and democracy.

At the core of critical experience are responsibility, problem solving and self-knowledge. These are traits or qualities of persons which must be learned and which must be continually renewed and affirmed through use - through practice and exercise. I use the terms "responsibility", "problem solving ability" and "self-knowledge" to denote primarily the activities of responding, of problem solving and of knowing one's self. Growth in these traits or activities is the essence of the good life and thus, fostering such growth is the essence of the good education. But why is growth in critical experience particularly relevant to the future? Why is it the most appropriate response to change - constant, accelerating, ubiquitous? To

begin answering these questions, it will be helpful to discuss the three aspects of critical experience separately. I will begin with problem solving ability.

We associate problem solving with technical expertise and we think of our schools as places where such expertise is developed. But what are the problems that are worth solving - that need solving? What are our real problems? Our most important problems? None of these questions can be addressed by technique alone, at least as it exists today. Yet these are among the most important questions that can possibly be asked. Further, such questions are largely excluded from formal education, which is now geared to produce blind technical expertise. The clear and present danger here is that the technical expertise of today is likely to be irrelevant or inappropriate to the problems of tomorrow. And this in turn points out that effective problem solving must begin with perception, definition and evaluation of problems; it must begin with such questions as "What problems must we solve"? and "What kinds of problems are more important and what kinds less important"? Only after these kinds of questions begin to be struggled with can the most appropriate techniques be chosen or developed.

If we ever hope to master change, rather than be its victims, we must become better monitors, perceivers and definers of change, of dangers and of opportunities. The main lesson that Darwin taught and which we are just beginning to learn is that a change in part of a system is always accompanied by change throughout the total system. And so we should be about the business of educating people not only or primarily in technique, but also in perception and definition and evaluation, for it is here that effective problem solving begins.

Now if you define for me, if you evaluate for me, then I do not define and I do not evaluate. If I do not do these things, then I do not learn these things. So, if we are to educate problem solvers, then our education must be student centered and not teacher centered. It must involve students in perceiving, defining and evaluation problems. And this calls for an explicitly active model of education based on fostering the passionate concern for life - for quality and for love - that we all remember as part of our childhood but which our educational institutions seem designed to deny.

So educating for effective problem solving implies asking questions

about what the real problems are. But questions about what the real problems are will only be asked and begin to be answered by people who are growing in self-knowledge. Such growth takes place, of course, in interaction with others. But the essential point here is that unless I know my own needs and abilities, unless I am continually growing in my knowledge of self, I cannot help but bring confusion and frustration to the perception, definition and solution of significant problems or to others attempts to meet their needs with my help. A key part of education, then, must be fostering growth in self-knowledge. The inquiries I undertake must be ones based on my perception of what is important. They must be ones that I care about, ones that I am willing to risk failure in. For learning typically does involve failure. The right questions are seldom asked the first time and the best technique is rarely chosen or developed early on. Success may be seen as almost <u>necessarily</u> involving failure. But failure can be dealt with, learned from and put to good use only by people secure in their sense of self and in the value of their projects and purposes.

Critical experience, then, includes growth in problem solving and knowing oneself. But it also includes knowing others and knowing others is primarily a process of responding to others. It is in this sense of responsiveness that responsibility is a part of critical experience. A responsible person is one who is able to respond to the needs and perceptions of others. Such a person can empathize and identify with others as feeling and planning beings - as beings of equal importance. A responsible person can form meaningful relationships and can work with others to meet mutual needs and realize mutual potential. Responsible people, most importantly, can be trusted to treat others as they themselves want to be treated.

This sense of responsibility as responsiveness or openness to others is broader than, but includes, other meanings of "responsibility." We use "responsibility" with a wide range of meanings, as indicated by: she is self-directed; he shows up on time; she fulfills her obligations faithfully; even, he is the culprit. Responsibility, in the sense of responsiveness, includes self-direction, showing up on time and fulfilling obligations, for these are all characteristics that allow one person to depend on another and thus are included in being open or responsive to the needs of others. Responsibility in this sense, however, explicitly

locates what it is that is important about the other meanings of the word. Showing up on time is the symbol of true responsibility; its essence is love - fellow feeling. And persons who are too responsible in this sense are likely to be culprits - troublemakers - at least in some institutional settings.

Critical experience, then, includes growth in responsibility, problem solving and self-knowledge. My discussion of it attempts to focus on the essences of these activities and on their inclusiveness. Problem solving includes technique and thus may be said to include critical or analytic thinking. But any meaningful problem solving presupposes that important problems have been identified. This, in turn, presupposes valuers - people who experience self and others in meaningful ways and who act on thought. Attention to tenets of right or critical thought in education are laudable, but we should not forget that the purpose of right thought is right action. Right thought and right action taken together, and broadly understood to include feeling, are what I mean by critical experience. Just what content "right" is to have in these contexts is open: that has to be left for the responsive and self-aware problem solvers of the future to fill in.

Given this understanding of critical experience and given that I am right in claiming that fostering such experience is the most appropriate response to a rapidly changing world, what consequences can be drawn about the values of individualism, freedom and democracy? The crucial questions here include: What dangers does change - constant, accelerating, ubiquitous - pose to these values? And can a fostering of critical experience deal with these dangers? I think the answer to the second question is "yes," but before explaining why, I want to explore the dangers.

We are consciously aware of the radical process of change primarily as a number of crises that rise and fall on the media charts. In fact, however, population growth, pollution and resource depletion, to mention but a few, are continual processes subject to acceleration and decelleration, primarily the former. These are all processes for which we, the human species, are responsible. We are the authors of some of the most dramatic changes Earth has ever undergone, but we are not particularly good at reading our own writing, nor at deciding what we want to write, nor at deciding how to write it. To extend the metaphor further: most of history may be seen as automatic writing. Yet in the face of crises, responses must be quick

and effective. This seems to demand a high degree of centralization of administration and of decision making power. The plans or aspirations of individuals, their freedom to realize these aspirations and their control over their own conditions may conflict with institutional imperatives of rapid adjustment and accomodation to changing circumstances. In crisis situations, the greater social good may be seen as effective institutional adjustment, even at a high cost to individuals' control over their own lives. It seems that we increasingly adopt policies on a national level and within our other social institutions on the rationale of necessity. We have no choice but to supply arms to a warring world; we have no choice but to develop nuclear power; we have no choice but to fire six tenured professors. And if we do in fact have no choices, or if the choices are of such a fateful nature that only experts should be allowed to make them, then freedom and democracy are anachronisms. And if institutional imperatives demand flexible, pliable, plastic functionaries, then individualism is an anachronism as well.

There are, however, other perspectives on change and the imperatives it places on us and our institutions. The concept of critical experience provides one such perspective. Persons who can perceive and respond emotionally to human need, who can define and evaluate problems and search effectively for tools to deal with those problems and who are secure enough in themselves to work effectively and passionately with others can also deal effectively with radical change. And they can do so without sacrificing the values of individualism, freedom and democracy. From the perspective of critical experience, the best way to meet the challenge of change is to foster the growth of individualism through fostering growth in self-knowledge, to expand freedom by developing better problem solvers and to enhance democracy by encouraging the responsiveness that makes true community possible. From the perspective of critical experience, the future holds not only dangers, but opportunities; opportunities to renew and further realize the values of individualism, freedom and democracy. It must be realized, however, that the ubiquitous nature of change will not leave these values untouched. Democracy, to survive in any meaningful way, will have to come to mean something more than electoral politics and a two party system; individualism will have to expand beyond self-centeredness; and freedom will have to mean more than freedom to be unequal. If these values

are to be more than a bad historical joke, their meaning will have to change and they will have to take on a reality throughout all our social institutions. The consequences of this for education are clear. If we are to educate people to function in a democratic society in this expanded sense, then we must educate them democratically; if we are to educate people to live lives of continual individual growth, then we must educate them as individuals; if we are to educate people to be free, then we must give them their heads and encourage them to think about what is important to them.

Finally, it is only people with the vision and love and skill which continual growth in critical experience can afford who will be able to meet the challenge of change in such a way that individualism, freedom and democracy are not sacrificed but expanded and renewed. In order that the challenge of the future be met in this way, we must be about the business of fostering critical experience in our own lives and in the lives of those we serve and work with. This has far ranging implications for our schools and for all other social institutions. We cannot expect to change the schools without changing the rest of society as well. There are no isolated problems and there can be no isolated solutions.

THE BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS

The nation's public schools have long been the target of criticism from both lay and professional interests. The attitudes of schoolmen have been painstakingly scrutinized, content of curricula has been deemed by some to be irrelevant for a space age society, culture conflict has been cited as an underlying condition of subgroup pseudocommunication, the fiscal structure of the public school system appears archaic, student misbehavior has become so prevalent and violent that "combat pay" has actually been proposed to compensate certain teachers, and, as cited in the previous passages, the educational system does not instill in children those tools and values necessary for their future, i.e., individuality, problem-solving, a critical perspective, a sense of freedom. These all seem to be sound, meaningful criticisms; all charged with good intent; all suggesting possibly valuable innovations. There are, however, serious problems with the process through which these and other innovative educational proposals have been introduced.

There is a serious gap between the true nature of the school and the

mythology which persists among and throughout the public sector. The individual school - as a microcosim of the school system, has evolved into a rigidly bureaucratic organization, while popular belief still rests upon Little Red School House imagery as portrayed on television and elsewhere. This myth suggests that the quality of the school experience depends primarily upon the goodwill of teachers and administrators and the receptivity of children. In other words, the view persists that the public school domain is one that values and fosters affective experience, i.e., fair play, honesty, democracy, good citizenship, taking turns. As an example, while "taking turns" is expressed to children as an instance of fairness, it is also an organizational need for order and crowd control. This failure to understand the system into which they propose inserting change-models has hampered the well-meaning innovative futurist. Presentations have not been cast in structural nor conceptual forms consistent with the bureaucratic host - the school. And, it is much more than an "apples and oranges" issue, it is more like a ball-bearing and marshmallow mixture. If innovative conceptual models are to be injected into an existent highly rigid structure of human activity and expectation, certain prerequisites must be adhered to. Foremost, is clear understanding of the system into which the innovation is to be inserted.

The organization of the public school rests upon traditional bureaucratic concepts permeated with business-industrial values. Central, here, is the conviction that highly structured rule-governed organizations of human enterprise, like Frankenstein, develop survival needs and protective mechanisms extraneous to the needs and interests of their human creators. Hence, change-models, regardless of their inherent or intended virtue, may be resisted as a matter of practice. Organizations of interdependent human activity can, indeed, become monstrous and self-serving long after forfeiture of their originally espoused purpose. "When bureaucratic survival becomes paramount, there is an abdication of policy making with respect to the major substantive goals of the organization. And, paradoxically, this form of concentration on survival leads to organizational disaster."[2] The point is, that despite dysfunctionality, it is difficult to pull the plug on a large bureaucratic organization. This depiction is not meant to resemble the rogue computor H.A.L. in the movie 2001 as much as the Civil Service System President Carter thought to disassemble and revamp.

It is not being suggested, either, that a science fiction theme replete

with clones and spors is at work. Instead, in our efforts to devise lasting and durable social and industrial organizations, we build-in (using the parlance of organizational theory) maintenance mechanisms which ward off change agents.

As a result of the school's evolution toward the industrial model, the teacher's role and image has shifted from that of a paradigm of virtue and self-control to a low level management type or foreman within an unfriendly monolithic institution. To this extent, anyone familiar with a factory can verify that neither management (administrators) nor labor (students) has much respect for the line foreman.

That schools have opted for a business-like industrial model is not a recent event. In the early twentieth century, the school order was pounced upon by an industrial ethic which insisted that the educational establishment redirect its focus from traditional scholasticism toward preparing students for participation in the newly developed business society. Too, the school itself was encouraged to adopt policies more efficient and business-like. The most prominent instigator of the nationwide addiction to efficiency cultism at that time was Fredrick Taylor. His time-and-efficiency studies were revolutionizing the fast growing industrialized economy. In the wake of the immigrant and rural migrant to urban centers for work in the factories, the urban schools became subjected to accusation.

> The publicity given the efficiency movement began to have its effect. In Providence, Rhode Island, the school board was criticized by the press for declaring a holiday on a Monday preceeding Decoration Day to allow students a four-day vacation. This action, said the newspaper, cost the taxpayers five thousand dollars, not in actual appropriations but in terms of loss of possible returns on the money invested. The board's action was described as 'poor business' and not 'scientific economy.'[3]

As publicity grew, the educators finally caught on. In 1912, an Efficiency Committee was established in New York City by the public school system. Following are their greatly acclaimed findings:

A. Purpose or objective of scientific management:
   1. to increase efficiency of the laborer; the pupil,
   2. to increase the quality of the product; the pupil,
   3. thereby to increase the amount of output and the value to the capitalist.

B. Comparisons between schools and mercantile establishments:
   1. the teacher obviously corresponds to planning department, superintendent, manager of a factory. Franklin Bobbitt, an instructor in Educational Administration at the University of Chicago prescribes the duties of the public school educator: 'They must find the best methods of work and they must enforce the use of these methods on the part of the workers, they must determine the qualifications necessary for the workers and see that each rises to the standard qualifications, if it is possible, and when impossible, see that he is separated from the organization.'
   2. the elements of the enterprise are the workman, the raw material, the finished product, the textbooks, charts and other apparatus.

C. The teacher should study and know thoroughly all these materials.

D. The final responsibility must be put on the pupil and he should be trained and made to feel this responsibility. The teacher's system of grading a pupil helps him to realize the amount of his progress.

E. Difficulties in the way of making exact applications of scientific principles:
   1. so many elements are combined into one, i.e., pupil,
   2. the raw material (the pupil) is affected by so many outside conditions,
   3. poor material cannot be exchanged for good,
   4. the teacher never sees or deals with a finished product.[4]

Responding to the pressure of the times, a school superintendent confessed, "you don't visit your classrooms regularly because you're writing publicity for the next levy that you can't afford have fail. Therefore, you don't know what is going on in the classrooms too well."[5]

The shift from teacher as moral paradigm to teacher as shop foreman was evident. Compare the above with "Instructions To Teachers, Dakota Territory, September, 1872":

1. Teachers will fill lamps, clean chimneys, and trim wicks each day.
2. Each teacher will bring a schuttle of coal and a bucket of water for the day's use.

3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs for the individual tastes of children.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teacher should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in other unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from his pay a goodly sum for his declining years so that he will not be a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, will give good reason for suspecting his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents a week in his pay providing the Board of Education approves.[6]

Clearly, the onus of responsibility, here, was adherence to the prevailing moral structure.

Michael Katz (1971), David Rogers (1969), and Ellen Lurie (1970) are but a few of the contemporaries who have viewed the school as the "system," the "organization," or the "buraucracy" in generally denigrative tones. Katz has written that, "among the competing organizational models, incipient bureaucracy has triumphed."[7] He sketches the rise of educational bureaucracy and cites many of its ramifications, concluding that incipient bureaucracy has remained unchanged for almost a century.

> First, the modification and eventual elimination of the bastion of democratic localism, the district system, whereby each section of a town or city managed its own schools with a great deal of autonomy. The ultimate remedy was the replacement of the district by one central Board of Education.[8]
>
> The grading of schools formed the second and related component of centralization. In the district system, children of all ages were taught in one room by one teacher. That is precisely what school reformers wanted to end. As Henry Barnard put it, one of the principal 'conditions for success' for a system of public education was a 'classification of scholars' that brought 'a large number of similar age and attainments, at all times, and in every state of advancement' together within the exclusive charge of the same teacher. Reformers argued that graded schools yielded enormous increases in educational efficiency and effectiveness, and their blueprints

> featured carefully designed sequences of schools of which a high school formed the apex.[9]

David Rogers (1968), also speaking to the issue of bureaucratic centralism, observes that, "many of the pathologies of the New York School system can be traced to the over-centralization of decisions, combined with the proliferation of specialized administrative units."[10] At the school level, itself, Professor Rogers continues, "the pattern of tight supervision rather than professional support is perhaps most acute in principal-teacher relations. Teachers feel the principals are often authoritarian, coercive and paternalistic, and union spokesmen describe principals as similar to old-time foremen, who talk of 'my' school and 'my' teachers."[11] It should be remembered, however, as Katz and Kahn (1966) remind us, that, "the essential difference between a democratic and an authoritative system is not whether the executive officers order or consult with those below them, but whether the power to legislate on policy is vested in the membership or in the top echelons."[12]

The notion that schools can no longer be envisioned as places where teachers are the spiritual media of the educative enterprise and children their beneficiaries, is found in Lurie's attempts to galvanize parent involvement in the schools. As she stated to parents,

> Schools should be for the children and in our large cities today that simply does not happen. These schools exist for the sake of the system. The children are barely tolerated. The system wants to build more buildings, raise more money, retain more teachers, reduce student unrest, win community support. The children simply serve that system.[13]

As has been said, the nation's public schools have long been the target of social critics. My intent in this section of the discussion is not merely to join those ranks. Instead, it is to conclusively depict the individual school as a traditional bureaucratic organization, with serious overtones of Erving Goffman's Total Institutionalism. It is my belief that meaningful innovation can occur only once the nature of the social system is clearly understood. Much well intentioned energy has been expended in the attempt to change schoolmen's attitudes, while the organizational structure has remained to resist attitudinal change. Conversely, structural innovation has been introduced and rebuffed by resistant attitudes. First, if change is to be purposeful for the society and meaningful for its children, the nature of the system itself must be

known. Once-and-for-all, we must forget the Little Red School House and its appealing pastoral imagery. For one, clinging to that fantasy inhibits growth. For another, that which we bemoan as sadly passed, probably never existed. In Nineteenth Century Dakota Territory, men teachers could spend one night a week for courting purposes - two if they went to church regularly. However, lady teachers "who married or engaged in other unseemly conduct" were dismissed.

Understanding the school as bureaucracy is essential to the understanding of our community. As Perrow (1972) states,

> As bureaucracies satisfy, delight, and satiate us with their output of goods and services, they also shape our mentality, control our life chances, and define our humanity. They do so not so much in our role as members of one or more of these organizations, but as members of a society that is truly an organizational society. Those who control these organizations control the quality of our life and they are largely self-appointed leaders.[14]

Specific characteristics of the bureaucratic model found in the school include: a highly specified vertical hierarchy of authorative strata; formal communication channels; highly specified role expectations; rules governing role interactions; rule rather than discretionary governance; centralized decision-making;[15] classification of workers (adults as well as children);[16] allocation parameters;[17] an organizational product; a genotypic function;[18] a budgetary unit; an operational ideology; task interdependence; assigned organizational space; disposal processes - suspension and expulsion; and on and on.

Three of many basic behaviors cited in the literature of organizational psychology which also neatly describe behaviors in the school include:

> Problems are approached in terms of some ready organizational precedent rather than a thorough search for alternatives.[19]

> The emphasis upon role and position decreases personalized relations.[20]

> ...challenged in the performance of his duties, (one's) defense is to fall back upon some highly visible role to prove that he has only been doing his duty as prescribed by statute.[21]

To accept the perspective which depicts the contemporary school as a traditional bureaucratic structure is the first step for the innovative futurist. The next involves "knowing the real goals of the organization."[22]

At this juncture, it is vital to separate the idealized goals of American education and those of schools. While the stated purposes of education may be highlighted by self-growth, the acquisition of skills for independent living, and the opportunity to better the human experience, these may not be found operationally manifest in schools.

The similarity between current school operational procedure and Erving Goffman's Conceptual Model of Total Institutions (Asylums, 1961) is striking.

> A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut-off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life.[23]

If one were to extend the definition a little and imagine the child "on leave" each evening to go home, the analogy is as follows:

> First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the members' daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of implicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution.[24]

The institutionalized patterns of student-supervisor interaction within the school seems reminescent of Goffman's presentation:

> When persons are moved in blocks, they can be supervised by personnel whose chief activity is not guidance or period inspection but rather surveillance - a seeing to it that everyone does what is required of him, under conditions where one's infraction is likely to stand out in relief against a visible, constantly examined compliance of others.[25]

Again,

> in total institutions there is a basic split between a large managed group conveniently called inmates and a smaller supervisory staff. Social mobility between the two strata is grossly

> restricted; social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed. Even talk across the boundaries may be conducted in a special tone of voice.[26]
>
> All of these restrictions of contact presumably help maintain antagonistic stereotypes.[27]

Could Goffman have possibly been thinking of kindergarten children when he wrote,

> It is characteristic of inmates that they come to the institution with a 'presenting culture' derived from a 'home world' - a way of life and a round of activities taken for granted until the point of admission to the institution.[28]

As a result of this conflict between presenting culture and institutional culture, "disculture" may occur; that is an untraining which renders the subject - the inmate - temporarily incapable of managing certain features of daily life on the outside, if and when he gets back to it.[29]

Lastly, for this discussion should not wander too far from its original course - although a great wealth more in Asylums could further this analogy,

> The recruit comes into the establishment with a conception of himself made possible by certain stable social arrangements in his home world. Upon entrance, he is immediately stripped of the support provided by those arrangements. In the accurate language of some of our oldest institutions, he begins a series of abasements, humiliations and profanations of self. His self is systematically, if often unintentionally, mortified.[30]

Aside from its likeness to the traditional bureaucratic model and Goffman's total institution, the public school is a closed-system (Katz and Kahn, 1966) type of organization. The individual school itself, has no mechanism nor precedent for systematic involvement with contemporary environmental elements. That is, the school has not, like other organizations, hired a Madison Avenue-type unit to continually test constituent needs and values in order to make modifications relevant to those needs and values. Meaningful policy-making is done at a central point outside of the school and is presented authoratively and holistically. This manner of centralized policy-making takes a great deal of time, lacks individualistic relevance to each unique neighborhood school, and comes across to school participants as cold and distant since it was not researched or created by

internal familiar sources. The individual public school simply does not have the authority to change itself nor to attempt meaningful experimentation with existent internal structures. The school for the most part is closed to the activity that abounds in its environment.

Before efforts to improve the public school experience can be realistically instituted, the innovator should know the milieu into which he intends to insert the change-model. Too, meaningful change within highly structured social systems rarely occurs, when a holistic take-it-or leave-it model is imposed from without. A change agent should be implanted in an embryonic incomplete form so that the growth is evolutionary, intertwined with existing elements so that the beneficial thrives and the dysfunctional is selected-out in as normal a process as possible.

Given the current structure and manifestation of the typical public school, one might question the feasibility of implanting the "critical experience" conceptual model.

TOWARD A PLAN

The nature of critical experience and the need for fostering it in the education of the future have been explained and argued for. Impediments to realizing critical experience in our schools have been located in the institutional and bureaucratic nature of our school systems. Are we at an impasse? Should we give up and go home? Or can we, without telling ourselves lies about our schools, move toward a realistic plan for making critical experience more central to education in the future? We think the answer is that we can; perhaps it is that we must. But to move toward such a plan, we must not see the schools as isolated from the rest of society, from the currents and conflicts which produce and exemplify change - constant accelerating, ubiquitous. Rather, if we are to move toward a plan or plans that will work, we must see our schools and the whole process of education in the context of the larger society. Further, we must grasp not just the fact of change, but the various sources and forces of change. We must move from the general fact of change to the specific kinds of change that are presently occuring and that are likely to emerge or become more prevelant in the future. We cannot stop here, however. We must assign meaning to these forces and sources of change; we

must evaluate them. What do the specific kinds of change that we identify mean for fostering critical experience in education? How can they be used? What dangers do they pose? What opportunities do they present? This section of the paper is an attempt to identify and evaluate important sources and kinds of change and propose a workable plan for making critical experience more central to education in the future.

The most dominant political trend for the last 500 years has been toward increased egalitarianism and democracy. This trend may be seen as having its roots in the growth of and reaction to the social system known as capitalism. But whatever the roots of this democratic trend, it is still with us and is presently manifested nationally in many ways. Among the most important are:

1. Demands and struggles by women to control their own lives and bodies, to gain access to jobs traditionally reserved for men and to change sex-role stereotypes.
2. Similar demands and struggles by non-European Americans around jobs and control over their cultural and community affairs and the affairs of the nation.
3. Pressure from handicapped persons and their sponsors to an equal share of social resources and to expanded access to the productive and cultural life of their communities and nation.
4. "Tax payers revolts" in which the voting public vetoes. The only form of taxation over which it has any meaningful control - property taxes for school levies.
5. Formation of voluntary consumer groups and neighborhood and community groups aimed at self-protection and political influence, usually on a local level.
6. Some struggles within labor unions for more rank and file control and for more control over production; the emergence of a farmers movement.
7. Regrouping and growth of a left wing dedicated to democratic socialism.
8. Discontent with and alienation from the official institutions of society which are said to embody equality, freedom and democracy; such discontent and alientation are especially prevalent, deep and tragic among working class youth of European and Third World descent.

The first three of these, centered on the concerns of women, minorities and handicapped persons, involve struggles to get what others are perceived as already having. They involve a cumulative use of legal and extra-legal strategies and tactics. They are not new struggles, but they have

accelerated, especially in the last 25 years, and they are bearing fruit. This fruit is seen not only in actually expanded opportunities, but in real and potential changes in the meanings of sex, race and physical and mental well-being. Women need not be, nor be seen as, passive; Black is beautiful; blind, deaf or retarded persons are or can be whole, healthy persons. These struggles are not over; some have perhaps barely begun. But some of the legal and social precedents have been set to carry them on and as they are carried on we may become increasingly able to identify and identify with each other primarily as humans. Such an enriched concept of being human has great potential for the kinds of changes necessary to make critical experience a reality in education.

The next three manifestations of the historical trend toward egolitarianism and democracy involve people who supposedly have what the people mentioned in the first three are trying to get. "Tax payers revolts," consumer and community action groups and some trends within the labor movement, however, all indicate that the majority - white, middle and working class America - feels threatened. Whatever social goods and services Middle-Americans may enjoy, they evidently are not satisfied with the amount of control they exercise over their own destinies. What advantage is there in owning two unsafe cars? Why grow crops, if you can't make your investment back? Why work diligently at a boring, dead-end, dangerous job? Why finance schools that increasingly fail to educate? These are among the sources of frustration for vast numbers of Americans. While there is presently no single ascendant movement that addresses these concerns, here and there, in fits and starts, changes occur and people learn to struggle for control over their own lives. From work slowdowns in Lordstown, Ohio, to power line sabatage in Minnesota, people learn that they need not be powerless.

In this context, an American Left, small and feeble as it may be, is trying to articulate and work for a vision of freedom, equality and democracy that makes sense to Americans and which integrates the concerns of the people in the first three and the second three groups. This is a left trying to recover from violent and extra-legal repression by the state and from drastic strategic and tactical errors of its own. But it is a left that is more mature and more self-critical than the arrogant student protesters of the 60's and which recognizes that the past can teach lessons.

It may be around for the long-haul and it may be able to deal with violent and extra-legal repression.

The last sign to be read is the general alienation many Americans experience from the official institutions of society. This alienation is expressed in a number of different ways by different sub-groups, including absenteeism, not voting, drug dependency, welfare dependency, crime and violence. As one of Stevie Wonder's songs puts it, people are "living just enough for the city." Tens of millions of Americans are just barely making it and these people experience the official institutions of society as designed to keep them in their places - just barely making it. This alienation is not experienced exclusively by the poor - the underclasses - and the working classes, but it is strongest among them, especially among poor and working class youth. And here, I would say, we are sitting on a powder-keg of unknown megatonage. I would say that the fuse it lit. And this is part of the fuse: if black and white working class and poor youth go to school together and get mis-educated together, they may not be so ready to blame each other for their woes later on; they may learn things that some will wish they hadn't; they may learn that their interests and positions in society are quite similar and that the best way to remedy the situation is to unite.

There are, then, a number of sources of and forces for change in what might be called the broadly political arena. Some of these hold clear potential for the kinds of changes that would support critical experience as central to education. These include the demands of women, non-European Americans and handicapped persons for a bigger slice of the social pie. I would say that the new (new) Left fits in this category as well. "Tax payers revolts" are signs of discontent, but, interestingly, some of them seem engineered by the "new" Right. Conservative politicians rush to capitalize on the aftermath of Proposition 13, claiming that it shows them to be the true voice of a people mislead by liberal politicians. The struggles in the labor movement and the increasing struggles to organize the unorganized, from J.P. Stevens workers, to secretaries, to teachers in higher education have potential for changing the consciousness and position of millions of Americans. Into the schools themselves come new mixtures of new youth, as yet unmelted, tutored to a different "pot" and by different media.

These are, then, some of the forces for change. But no matter how

many forces for change are described and analyzed, we need ways to bring some of them to bear on the schools, and, as has been argued earlier, step one in the change process involves understanding the school's bureaucratic structure, its total institutional character, and its closed system-type relationship with the environment. Step two involves framing the innovative proposals in terms consistent with those operable in the host organization. Thus, what has been termed "critical experience" is called "discretionary decision-making" in managementese. (Kenneth C. Davis, 1971) Discretionary decision-making as an outgrowth of problem-solving has a firm foundation in traditional organizational theory.

Accordingly, there are seven instruments to be employed in the structuring of discretionary decision-making: (1) open plans; (2) open policy statements; (3) open rules; (4) open findings; (5) open reasons; (6) open precedents; and, (7) fair informal procedure. "The reason for repeating the work 'open' is a powerful one: openness is the natural enemy of arbitrariness and a natural ally in the fight against injustice."[31] As educational tools, these seven instruments may be translated to mean:

1. openness and clarity of long term implication of the experience
2. openness and clarity of generalized intellectual procedure; e.g., survey research
3. openness and clarity of exact intellectual procedure; e.g., findings must have been experimentally verified in scientific study
4. open and clear sharing of all findings regardless of their affinity to the hypothesis
5. openness and clarity in sharing the reasoning process employed
6. open and clear statements regarding the precedent upon which the findings rest
7. a sense of fairness and looseness so as to maintain focus on the issue and not upon a dogmatic "scientific procedure."

Davis speculated that "more than 90 percent of the American administrative process is behind closed doors."[32] Including discretionary decision-making in our school curricula would hopefully lead to an openness in our future interpersonal and organizational behaviors.

Step three of the change process entails providing the organization a "level of comfort" with this and other futuristic innovative propositions.

To do this, the school must move from its closed-system posture toward an open-system of environmental inter-relatedness. In attempts to become aware of and sensitive to those social forces discussed previously, the school must be able to function in accordance with the maximalization principle, "the self-propelled drive toward growth by enveloping resources in the environment."[33] As a compliment to the maximalization operation, the school must have its own maintenance mechanism, "an internal device that attempts to integrate the new brought in by expansion with the existent, thereby maintaining organizational equilibrium."[34] Characteristic of the interplay between these two mechanisms is healthy environmental inter-relatedness, "a continually on-going exchange with environmental neighbors; included here might be in-put of resources in exchange for out-put products or simply exchanges of information about the societal climate."[35]

In moving toward an open-system operation, negative entropy must be considered. Negative entropy is "the effort to curtail the entropic process - the natural tendency for all living organisms to move toward their own demise, by storing a surplus of vitally needed resources. This storing is done as a precaution against the possibility of crisis periods when resources cannot be obtained from the environment."[36] Too, the value of equifinality, "the belief that like objectives may be obtained through use of a variety of methods,"[37] needs to be recognized. Lastly, acceptance of informal groups is essential. This entails "the expectation that individuals within the organization will coalesce as informal groups and sub-systems."[38] It should always be remembered that people "track all kinds of mud from the rest of their lives with them into the organization, and they have all kinds of interests that are independent of the organization."[39]

Step four in the process involves a societal redefinition of relationship between the educator and the student. The fantacized omnipresent caring loving adult - adoring child relationship simply does not exist nor, given the massive variegation of personality interplay, will it. Yet, there is dignified humanistic ground both mentor and student can share. That high ground, in fact, is already being identified in courts of law. "Two recent cases, Peter Doe v. San Francisco Unified School District (Superior Ct. of San Francisco County, Case No. 653-312) and Ilene Iamniello v. University of Bridgeport (Second Circuit Court of Fairfield County, Case No. 100009), raise the question of the school's legal duty to

pupils and clearly frame the malpractice issues in education."[40] Here, the teacher is professional producer and the student is client consumer. Mutuality as well as independence and individuality may commingle in relative peace once the school integrates the concept through its maximalization principle, examines it personally through use of its maintenance mechanism, and constructs relevent guidelines through the process of discretionary decision-making.

As mortals, of course, we must always season our work with precautions. Bertrand Gross (1966) suggests the following:

> If we are really to put men in our models, we must be bold enough to cope with the following five aspects of social systems:
>
> (1) Individuals and groups - not money, land, roads, roles or disembodied benefits - as the central elements and actors in the structure of the social system;
>
> (2) the satisfaction or frustration of individual and group interests or needs as the most important dimensions in the performance of a social system;
>
> (3) continuing processes of conflict as well as cooperation between a social system and its environment and among and within its sub-systems (including the smallest sub-system, the individual personality);
>
> (4) complex based, not only on many inter-related sub-systems but on being contained in larger systems and criss-crossed by many overlapping systems; and,
>
> (5) system looseness, with many 'black boxes' that are partially autonomous, imperfectly coordinated, only partially controllable, and never fully knowable.[41]

We need a new mythology for education. In it, the essential elements of critical experience, by whatever name, must be central. And we need a vision of how such a new mythology can be realized - how changes consistent with that mythology can be effected. We need to understand bureaucracy and social systems and come to see our schools in these terms. This will give us some chance of creating an appropriate mythology and effecting appropriate change. We have tried to further the process of understanding what the real educational imperatives of the future are and to propose ways of meeting them. We need to create an education that is consistent with the needs of tomorrow - and we need to do it in ways that are consistent with the reality of today. We have to begin a process of opening up the schools to the world and ourselves to each other.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching As A Subversive Activity (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969) p

[2]Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966) p. 26.

[3]Raymond Callahan, Education and the Efficiency Cult (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: 1962) pp. 48-49.

[4]Ibid., p. 58.

[5]Ibid., p. 206.

[6]"Instructions To Teachers," Dakota Territory, September 1872, Museum of Pioneer Life, Friends of the Middle Border, Mitchell, South Dakota.

[7]Michael B. Katz, Class, Bureaucracy and Schools (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) p. 28.

[8]Ibid., p. 34.

[9]Ibid., p. 35.

[10]David Rogers, 110 Livingston Street (New York: Vintage Books, Division of Random House, Inc., 1969) p. 271.

[11]Ibid., p. 282.

[12]Katz and Kahn, p. 45.

[13]Ellen Lurie, How To Change the Schools (New York: Vintage Books, Division of Random House, Inc.,) p. 10.

[14]Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company, 1972) p. 7.

[15]Katz, p. 35.

[16]Katz and Kahn, p. 42.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., p. 56.

[19]Ibid., p. 74.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Perrow, p. 12.

[23]Erving Goffman, Asylums (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961) p. 6.

[24]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[25]Ibid., p. 7.

[26]Ibid., p. 9.

[27]Ibid., p. 12.

[28]Ibid., p. 13.

[29]Ibid., p. 14.

[30]Ibid., p. 17.

[31]Kenneth Culp Davis, Discretionary Justice (Urbana, Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1971) p. 98.

[32]Ibid., p. 113.

[33]Katz and Kahn, p. 31.

[34]Ibid., p. 32.

[35]Ibid., p. 34.

[36]Ibid., p. 37.

[37]Ibid., p. 40.

[38]Ibid., p. 43.

[39]Perrow,

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[40]William Hazard, "Educational Malpractice: Some Issues," Journal of the National Center for Law Focused Education Volume Five, Number One (February 1976): 2-8.

[41]Bertrand Gross, "Urban Planning and Social Systems," Environment For Man, ed. William R. Ewald (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966) p. 45.